

Detecting Hearing Difficulties in Children and Addressing it at Home

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How do we know if a child is ignoring us or has any difficulty listening? Talking to your child but he seems inattentive and doesn't respond can be quite irritating for the parents. How do we know if a child is ignoring us or has any difficulty listening? Talking to your child but he seems inattentive and doesn't respond can be quite irritating for the parents. At times, you'll yell at your child to turn the volume down of the program they are watching or games they're playing. However, have you ever asked yourself if the behavior is related something else? Is it Selective Hearing? Hearing difficulties?

Children learn to talk through imitating the sounds they hear and the voices of their parents, siblings and what they often watch. According to [research](#) about 2 or 3 out of every 1,000 children in the United States are born with hearing problems, some are deaf. More lose their hearing later in their childhood.

I had once a student with hearing difficulties, and not being able to detect it too early has caused his speech delay and learning difficulties. The red flags were already been manifested by the child when he was only a year-old by not reacting to loud noises, not knowing his name, not being able to speak (even words like "dadadada", "mama") and behavioral problems such as throwing tantrums, hitting, etc. Hearing is fundamental to the cognitive development, communication and socialization of the child. Early detection can help to overcome future problems such as speech and learning difficulties. It is important to recognize it sooner; may it be having your child screened or check for visible signs:

- does not respond when called or only responding to loud voices
- difficulties in learning (because they can't hear the teacher)
- speaking too loudly without realizing
- watching television with the volume turned up too high
- incorrectly pronouncing words / speech difficulties / delayed speech
- inattentive or saying "Huh?" or "What?" most of the time
- behavior problems (not being able to communicate what they want)
- complain of a buzzing sound in their ears (tinnitus)

You may also answer this [checklist](#) if you are still unsure whether your child is experiencing hearing difficulties, and you may also listen to this [podcast](#) that explains hearing among children.

What are the tests used to check if the child has hearing difficulties?

The important thing is that we should be able to grasp on the situation and try to understand if the child is really just ignoring you or having some difficulties hearing

sounds, if the signs or symptoms continues to manifest, it is better to do some tests that may be done at home:

- Simple tests or behavioral observation audiometry such as making sounds and observing the child's response
- Tests with an audiometer – a machine that produces sounds such as beeps and whistles, you can also download an audiometer application on your phone but know that there are limitations to this. This will help us pinpoint the degree of hearing difficulties by listening to certain sounds.
- Using [Sound Scouts](#), an Australian-invented, online game app test for children.

I found that my child has hearing difficulties, what can I do?

As a parent, it won't be easy addressing these problems at home, but learning and reading articles on the specific subject may help get a better perception about your child's difficulties and it may prevent future problems.



Creating a good listening environment

When talking to your child, make sure you are away from all the noise (e.g. television, iPad, pets, siblings etc.) and that your child can attentively respond to you. Have him understand what you're saying by speaking slowly and loudly without him thinking that you are yelling. Also, it is better to make the people around your child understand the situation. Socialization is important; this will teach your child to analyze situations by observing other people's behavior.

If your child is still in distance learning, it is best to sit next to your child to explain what the teacher says, simplify if necessary, and make sure that your child is in a room where there are minimal or zero sources of noise (e.g. away from the kitchen, doors and windows). In addition, the child must also be away from things that may cause distraction (e.g. toys, gadgets, pets, siblings, etc.) You may use a loudspeaker to help the child hear the teacher better.

It is important to help your child pay attention rather than getting frustrated easily by:

- Calling their name before giving instructions or asking for something, when they do not answer, try touching their shoulder or lightly tapping their hand, be sure that you are making eye contact.
- When your child is doing something, avoid taking what they're playing with because this might cause frustration.
- Give signal on who's talking, repeat what they say so that they know you understand.
- If your child does not understand something, use simpler words or make your statement brief and concise, and you can also make them repeat what you said.

My child is frustrated, what should I do?

- Have a grasp of the situation, the child may not realize that you are talking to them, however, by keeping calm and repeating what you have just said will help them to appreciate communication and better understand, but make sure your child listens and is not distracted.
- If you think your child is not able to say or tell you what they want, it is good to use visual signals or gestures to communicate better and avoid communication errors.
- Encourage your child to say if he or she has trouble hearing, and be sure that you're speaking slowly and clearly.

- Do not force your child to answer immediately, wait for him or her to analyze what you have just said.
- Social skills are important, involve your child in school clubs or organizations where he or she can practice talking and listening to different people.
- Empathizing with your child is essential. Be patient, understanding and encouraging.



Some things to also be consider at home in distance learning:

- The learning are of the child, a room that is considered to be of that in a classroom (use carpets, and windows that cannot cause distraction).
- Use the walls for art works, worksheets, and to do lists. Having your child's works around the room may motivate the child's learning.
- Close doors and windows to prevent outside distractions.
- Make a safe environment for the child, cover chairs and tables with soft materials

- Make sure that your child feels comfortable.
- The room should be free from noises that may be a distraction.
- During class hours, give your child rest if necessary, some children like to continue the class without breaks.

Use visual cues to help you child's language

- Eye contact is important when talking, which shows that you are listening. Speaking slowly and clearly may help the child better understand what you are trying to say.
- Encourage your child to identify the emotions of the speaker; this will give him or her an idea whether someone is mad, happy or sad.
- Use images or drawings that can help your child to better communicate. A smile can signify that he or she is happy. This can also be used in learning such as having diagrams, charts and pictures that shows routines around his or her room.

Always communicate with your child

Communication is a paramount especially to a child, paying particular attention to the hearing of your child and the ways in which words are used are part of the communication. Listen to how your child speaks and how he or she uses words to make statements. Practice communication by:

- Ask your child what he or she likes, what your child's day was like, what makes him or her happy or frustrated.
- Facial expressions are important when talking, this will help your child understand other people as well by just how their face change while talking
- Play with your child and ask them how they play with certain toys such as lego, play-doh, board games, etc. and giving instructions will help them to build confidence.
- Practice listening by playing "Simon Says," "Beat Drums" or even dancing to music while staying on beat
- When going outside, teach them new words or ask them if they know what a specific thing is called.
- Lastly, read to your child and ask questions about the stories.

Talk to your child's teachers and you may also seek a speech therapist to learn more about your child's needs and what can work better for your child. Working together will benefit the child in the long term, but also help the child on becoming independent by giving him tasks that you know will challenge him.

About the author

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Links and references

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